

Minutes from the WeCAN Meeting held at Westfield City Hall Assembly Room on  
May 29, 2012 at 7 pm.

Disclaimer: I hope you will find these notes helpful. They are not a complete representation of the meeting, but rather the highlights of topics discussed. Feel free to contact Carrie or Derek at Westfield City Hall: [communications@westfield.in.gov](mailto:communications@westfield.in.gov) or (317) 804-3001 if you have any questions.

**May 29, 2012**

Agenda

- I. Welcome
- II. Anne Poynter – Downtown Westfield Association – Farmer’s Market
- III. Presentation by Pam Louks, IN Dept. of Natural Resources – Emerald Ash Borer in Subdivisions
- IV. Natural Habitat in Beacon Pointe Subdivision
- V. Todd Burtron, Westfield Chief of Staff – Discussion on tax rates
- VI. Kurt Wanninger, Director of Public Works – Update on Water/Sewer rate increase
- VII. Conclude



**I. Welcome**

The next WeCAN meeting is on **Tuesday, June 26, at 7pm at City Hall Assembly Room** (130 Penn St).

John Dippel, City Council Vice-President, opened the meeting with introductions.

**II. Anne Poynter – Downtown Westfield Association – Farmer’s Market**

Anne Poynter, of the Downtown Westfield Association, and Amber Willis, Chairman of the Westfield Farmer’s Market, announced that June 1<sup>st</sup> is the kick off date for the Market. They asked for people to take a yard sign and post it outside of their neighborhood entrance or in their yard. They said 45 vendors are expected each Friday, with Radio Disney attending the first Friday of each month. They also gave out magnets. Amber encouraged everyone to “Like” the Farmer’s Market Facebook page to get updates and pictures of the market.

**III. Presentation by Pam Louks, DNR – Emerald Ash Borer**

Pam Louks, with the DNR spoke on the dangers of the Emerald Ash Borer in Indiana and Westfield. She presented a power point presentation. She says that when EAB is found, there are multiple choices on how to deal with it – either remove/chip, treat, remove/lumber, or reforest. She says there are some communities that partner with portable mills to reuse the claimed wood. Bloomington, IN is a good example of that partnership.

Pam mentioned the Purdue EAB cost calculator is helpful when deciding on how to treat the trees. She listed several good alternatives to ash trees for planting. She also stated that nonprofit organizations can apply for a grant through DNR for treatments. If not a non-profit, they can

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apply through a non-profit. HOAs can call Pam directly for a list of certified arborists in the area.

A question was posed as to whether it was ok to burn if allowed in the community. Pam said that it depends on city ordinances, but there is a burn law per the state that requires a permit.

\*Pam's presentation will be posted on the WeCAN website as soon as it becomes available.

#### **IV. Natural Habitat in Beacon Pointe Subdivision**

While the meeting was in between presenters, Mr. Dippel called for new ideas or thoughts on the current way WeCAN was being run. No one spoke up, so Mr. Dippel brought up the fact that there was recently a dispute between a homeowner and their HOA, Beacon Pointe, due to the "natural habitat" she was creating in her yard.

Representatives from Beacon Pointe were given the opportunity to talk about the issue and how they were handling the situation. It appeared that the resident found a loophole allowing her to grow her habitat in the HOA covenants. It was stated that Beacon Pointe had contacted the City to enforce the ordinance on tall grass, but it was decided by the city that, in this case, the homeowner did not break any ordinance law. Beacon Pointe representatives urged other HOAs to check their bylaws to make sure there are no loopholes present for this type of yard growth.

An update on the issue will be given at the June 26<sup>th</sup> WeCAN meeting.

#### **V. Todd Burtron, Westfield Chief of Staff – Discussion on tax rates**

Westfield's Chief of Staff, Todd Burtron, presented a small PowerPoint on the City's current tax rates. While the presentation displayed the school rates and compared them with other communities, a representative from the schools was not present. Todd compared Westfield's tax rate with those of surrounding municipalities. He showed several graphs including expenditures per capita of Westfield vs. surrounding municipalities. He went on to explain the 1% property tax caps and what that means for the City and its residents. Todd showed that the City's portion of the tax rate is 76 cents of a total \$2.99 tax bill per \$100. Solutions to bring taxes down are to build on the commercial tax base by luring businesses to Westfield. He reviewed the fundamentals behind Tax Increment Districts (TIF) and explained how the City uses them.

\*Todd's presentation will be posted on the WeCAN website as soon as it becomes available.

#### **VI. Kurt Wanninger, Dir. of Public Works – Update on Water/Sewer rate increase**

Kurt spoke on the recent water/sewer rate increase that was approved by the council. Overall, the percentage increase was 17.36%. He addressed questions about why a rate increase was necessary, citing usage and the need for upgrading the current system. Kurt also explained the

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summer sewer credit. For more information on the rate increase and the summer sewer credit plan, please visit the Public Works page of the City's website.

## **VII. Conclude**

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If you have any topic suggestions or issues that you have questions on, please don't hesitate to contact us at [communications@westfield.in.gov](mailto:communications@westfield.in.gov).

For updated announcements and information from the past meetings, please visit the WeCAN Website: <http://sites.google.com/site/wecaninformation/>